

Kim Reynolds

Kimberly Kay Reynolds (née **Strawn**, born August 4, 1959) is an American politician serving as the 43rd and current Governor of Iowa since 2017. A member of the Republican Party, she is the first female Governor of Iowa.

Reynolds previously served as the 46th Lieutenant Governor of Iowa from 2011 to 2017. Before she was elected Lieutenant Governor, Reynolds served as Clarke County Treasurer for four terms and then served in the Iowa Senate from 2009 to 2010. Reynolds became Governor of Iowa in May 2017 when her predecessor, Terry Branstad, stepped down to become United States Ambassador to China. She won a full term as governor in the 2018 gubernatorial election.

In May 2018, Reynolds signed a bill that scaled back energy efficiency programs and a bill that the *Des Moines Register* referred to as "the most restrictive abortion ban in the nation".

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Kim Reynolds



43rd Governor of Iowa

Incumbent

Assumed office

May 24, 2017

Lieutenant Adam Gregg

Preceded by Terry Branstad

46th Lieutenant Governor of Iowa

In office

January 14, 2011 – May 24, 2017

Governor Terry Branstad

Preceded by Patty Judge

Succeeded by Adam Gregg

**Member of the Iowa Senate
from the 48th district**

In office

January 11, 2009 – November 12, 2010

Preceded by Jeff Angelo

Succeeded by Joni Ernst

Personal details

Born Kimberly Kay Strawn
August 4, 1959
St. Charles, Iowa, U.S.

Political party Republican

Early life, education and family



Reynolds with husband Kevin Reynolds in 2010

Reynolds was born Kimberly Kay Strawn in St. Charles, Iowa. She attended high school at the Interstate 35 Community School District and graduated in 1977.^[1]

Strawn attended Northwest Missouri State University, for one semester (Fall 1977) where she took classes in business, consumer sciences and clothing sales and design. She dropped out of college

after one semester. She later took classes at Southeastern Community College in the late 1980s, and then took accounting classes at Southwestern Community College between 1992 and 1995. She left both of these institutions.^[2] Reynolds began partially online^[3] classes at Iowa State University in 2012, and received a Bachelor of Liberal Studies degree in December of 2016.^[4]

Reynolds was twice charged with driving under the influence of alcohol, first in 1999 and again in 2000.^[5] The 2000 case was originally charged as a Second Offense OWI, but eventually reduced to First Offense OWI. Reynolds was sentenced to pay a \$1,500 fine and serve 12 months of informal probation. A related open container charge was dropped entirely.^[6] In 2017, Reynolds stated that she sought inpatient treatment for alcoholism following her second arrest and that she had been sober for nearly 17 years.^[7]

Reynolds married Kevin Reynolds in 1982. As of 2018, the Reynoldses have three daughters (Jennifer, Nicole and Jessica)^[8] and nine grandchildren.^[9]

Iowa Senate

Reynolds served four terms as the Clarke County Treasurer before being elected on November 4, 2008 to represent the 48th district in the Iowa Senate, defeating Ruth Smith (D) and Rodney Schmidt (I).^[10] In the Senate, she was a member of five committees: Economic Growth, Environment & Energy Independence, Local Government (ranking member), Rebuild Iowa, Transportation, and Appropriations Subcommittee (Economic Development Appropriations Subcommittee). In 2010, Reynolds endorsed a ban on same-sex marriage in Iowa.^[11]



Reynolds during her time in the Iowa Senate

Lieutenant Governor of Iowa

On June 25, 2010, Republican gubernatorial nominee Terry Branstad publicly proposed Reynolds for Lieutenant Governor. The next day, she received the Republican nomination from the 2010 Republican State Convention. On November 2, 2010, the Branstad/Reynolds ticket won the general election.^{[12][13]} Reynolds resigned from her Senate seat on November 12, 2010 to "focus solely on assisting Gov. (Terry) Branstad's transition team."^[14]

Reynolds was the Lieutenant Governor of Iowa from 2011 until 2017.^[15] Unlike Lieutenant Governors in many other states, Reynolds had specific roles, including co-chairing the Governor's Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) Advisory Council, co-chairing the Iowa Partnership for Economic Progress board, co-chairing the Military Children Education Coalition and serving as Gov. Branstad's representative on the board of the Iowa State Fair.^[16]

Reynolds was elected Chair of the National Lieutenant Governors Association (NLGA) in July 2015.^[17]



Branstad and Reynolds after the Cedar River floods of 2016

Governor of Iowa

Tenure

On May 24, 2017, Reynolds became governor of Iowa upon the resignation of Governor Terry Branstad, who stepped down to become the new United States Ambassador to China. Reynolds is the first female governor of Iowa.^[18]

Reynolds's elevation to the governorship created a vacancy in the office of the lieutenant governor, and reports indicated that her selection of a lieutenant governor could be challenged in the Iowa Supreme Court.^[19] An opinion from the Iowa attorney general indicated that "an individual promoted from lieutenant governor to governor, as was Reynolds, [did] not have the authority to appoint a new lieutenant governor."^[20] On May 25, 2017, Reynolds announced that Iowa Public Defender Adam Gregg would serve as acting lieutenant governor; to avoid litigation, the Reynolds administration stated that Gregg "[would] not hold the official position of lieutenant governor" and would not succeed Reynolds in the event of her inability to serve as governor.^[21]

In 2018, following the U.S. Supreme Court's decision in *Obergefell v. Hodges* (2015), Reynolds described same-sex marriage as a "settled" issue and said that she did not consider herself obligated to follow the Iowa Republican Party platform provision against same-sex marriage.^{[22][23]}

Reynolds acknowledged that Trump's trade and tariff policies were hurting farmers, but said she believed that farmers would benefit from them in the end.^{[24][25][26]}

In May 2018, Reynolds signed a bill to revamp Iowa's energy efficiency policies.^[27] Also in May 2018, Reynolds signed a fetal heartbeat bill that the *Des Moines Register* referred to as "the most restrictive abortion ban in the nation".^[28] In January 2019, the law was struck down by an Iowa state judge, who said it was unconstitutional.^[29]

Reynolds began her first full term on January 18, 2019.

On March 27, 2019, Reynolds signed a bill into law requiring public universities to protect the "fullest degree of intellectual freedom and free expression".^{[30][31]}

Through her judicial appointments, Reynolds shifted the Iowa Supreme Court in a conservative direction.^[32]

On June 30, 2020, there was media coverage when an Iowa State Patrol vehicle carrying Reynolds hit a Black Lives Matter protester, whom officials say intentionally stepped in front of the vehicle's path.^[33]

In August 2020, Reynolds signed an executive order permitting felons to vote in Iowa elections upon completing their sentence. Iowa was the final state to get rid of a lifetime ban on voting from felons.^{[34][35]}

Coronavirus pandemic

During the COVID-19 pandemic, Reynolds signed a Proclamation of Disaster Emergency on March 9, 2020.^[36] That same month she ordered the closure of some recreational businesses and school closure.^{[37][38]} She ordered a halt to what she described as "non-essential" surgeries, which included surgical abortions.^[39] During the pandemic, Reynolds did not implement a stay-at-home order and did not issue a face mask mandate.^[37] In June, recreational businesses such as bars and restaurants were fully reopened, leading to surges in coronavirus case numbers.^[37] In July 2020, she argued that face mask mandates implemented by localities in Iowa were "not appropriate" and not lawful.^[37] She said that the science on the effectiveness of face masks in halting the coronavirus pandemic was not settled; the World Health Organization, the Center for Disease Control, and Iowa's own department of health all recommended that people wear face masks in public to halt the spread of the virus.^[40]

In April 2020, following a tip from Ashton Kutcher, Reynolds, signed a contract with Utah startup Nomi Health to develop a COVID-19 testing program called TestIowa.^{[41][42][43]}

In July 2020, Reynolds said she would invalidate plans implemented by some districts to limit in-person classes to one day a week for most students, with online learning on other days, overriding local school districts and requiring students to spend at least half of their schooling in classrooms.^[44] This action prompted public school teachers from Iowa to begin sending their obituaries to Reynolds.^[45]

In July 2020, Reynolds had the lowest Covid-19 approval rating of any governor in the nation at 28%^[46].

Electoral history

Iowa Senate history

2008 primary

Iowa State Senate District 48 Republican primary election, 2008				
Party	Candidate	Votes	%	±
Republican	Kim Reynolds	2,487	61.77	
Republican	Jim Parker	1,539	38.23	

2008 general election

Iowa State Senate District 48 general election, 2008				
Party	Candidate	Votes	%	±
Republican	Kim Reynolds	14,274	52.97	
Democratic	Ruth Smith	11,653	43.24	
Independent	Rodney Schmidt	1,021	3.79	

Gubernatorial elections

2010

2010 Iowa gubernatorial election ^[47]					
Party		Candidate	Votes	%	±
	Republican	Terry Branstad / Kim Reynolds	592,494	52.8%	+8.2
	<u>Democratic</u>	<u>Chet Culver (incumbent) / Patty Judge (incumbent)</u>	484,798	43.2%	-10.8
	Iowa Party ^[48]	Jonathan Narcisse / Richard Marlar	20,859	1.9%	<i>n/a</i>
	<u>Libertarian</u>	Eric Cooper / Nick Weltha	14,398	1.3%	+0.7
	Independent ^[49]	Gregory Hughes / Robin Prior-Calef	3,884	0.4%	<i>n/a</i>
	<u>Socialist Workers</u>	David Rosenfeld / Helen Meyers ^[50]	2,757	0.3%	+0.05
	Write-in	<i>n/a</i>	2,823	0.3%	<i>n/a</i>
Majority			108,238		
Turnout			1,133,430		
	<u>Republican</u> gain from <u>Democratic</u>		Swing		

2014

2014 Iowa gubernatorial election ^[51]					
Party		Candidate	Votes	%	±
	Republican	Terry Branstad (incumbent) / Kim Reynolds (incumbent)	666,032	58.99%	+6.18%
	<u>Democratic</u>	<u>Jack Hatch / Monica Vernon</u>	420,787	37.27%	-5.94%
	<u>Libertarian</u>	Lee Deakins Hieb / Tim Watson	20,321	1.80%	+0.52%
	<u>Independent</u>	Jim Hennager / Mary Margaret Krieg	10,582	0.94%	N/A
	Iowa	Jonathan R. Narcisse / Michael L. Richards	10,240	0.91%	-0.95%
	<i>n/a</i>	Write-ins	1,095	0.09%	-0.16%
Total votes			'1,129,057'	'100.0%'	N/A
	<u>Republican</u> hold				

2018

Reynolds' decision to have Rep. Steve King co-chair her campaign stirred controversy, as King has a history of remarks that have been described as racist.^[53] *The Des Moines Register* editorial board wrote, "Gov. Kim Reynolds has kept him on as her campaign co-chairman, while muttering increasingly thin-lipped denials that she agrees with his ideological extremism."^[54] Reynolds had previously praised King, saying he was "a strong defender of freedom and our conservative values".^[55] After Election Day, Reynolds criticized King and said that he needed to change his approach.^[56]

Reynolds won the Republican nomination for Governor and defeated Democrat Fred Hubbell and Libertarian Jake Porter in the general election on November 6, 2018.^[57] Reynolds made history as the first woman elected Governor of Iowa.^[58] While polls showed that she was trailing Hubbell,^[59] she defeated him, 50.3%–47.5%. She won primarily by sweeping nearly the entire state west of Des Moines.^[60] In particular, she dominated the state's 4th congressional district, which she carried with almost 61 percent of the vote.^[61]

Iowa gubernatorial election, 2018 ^[62]					
Party		Candidate	Votes	%	±
	<u>Republican</u>	Kim Reynolds (incumbent) / <u>Adam Gregg</u>	667,275	50.26%	-8.73%
	<u>Democratic</u>	Fred Hubbell / Rita R. Hart	630,986	47.53%	+10.26%
	<u>Libertarian</u>	Jake Porter / Lynne Gentry	21,426	1.61%	-0.19%
	<u>Independent</u>	Gary Siegwarth / Natalia Blaskovich	7,463	0.56%	N/A
	<i>n/a</i>	Write-ins	488	0.04%	-0.05%
Total votes			'1,327,638'	'100.0%'	N/A
	<u>Republican</u> hold				

See also

- List of female governors in the United States
- List of female lieutenant governors in the United States

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External links

- [Office of the Governor \(http://governor.iowa.gov/\)](http://governor.iowa.gov/) official government site
- [Kim Reynolds for Governor \(https://reynoldsgregg.com/\)](https://reynoldsgregg.com/) official campaign site
- [Kim Reynolds \(https://curlie.org/Regional/North_America/United_States/Iowa/Government/Executive/Governor_Kim_Reynolds\)](https://curlie.org/Regional/North_America/United_States/Iowa/Government/Executive/Governor_Kim_Reynolds) at [Curlie](#)
- [Appearances \(https://www.c-span.org/person/?kimreynolds\)](https://www.c-span.org/person/?kimreynolds) on [C-SPAN](#)

Iowa Senate		
Preceded by <u>Jeff Angelo</u>	Member of the Iowa Senate from the 48th district 2009–2010	Succeeded by <u>Joni Ernst</u>
Party political offices		
Preceded by <u>Bob Vander Plaats</u>	Republican nominee for Lieutenant Governor of Iowa 2010, 2014	Succeeded by <u>Adam Gregg</u>
Preceded by <u>Terry Branstad</u>	Republican nominee for Governor of Iowa 2018	Most recent
Political offices		
Preceded by <u>Patty Judge</u>	Lieutenant Governor of Iowa 2011–2017	Succeeded by <u>Adam Gregg</u>
Preceded by <u>Terry Branstad</u>	Governor of Iowa 2017–present	Incumbent
U.S. order of precedence (ceremonial)		
Preceded by <u>Mike Pence</u> <i>as <u>Vice President</u></i>	Order of Precedence of the United States Within Iowa	Succeeded by Mayor of city in which event is held
		Succeeded by Otherwise <u>Nancy Pelosi</u> <i>as <u>Speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives</u></i>
Preceded by <u>Greg Abbott</u> <i>as <u>Governor of Texas</u></i>	Order of Precedence of the United States Outside Iowa	Succeeded by <u>Tony Evers</u> <i>as <u>Governor of Wisconsin</u></i>

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